What is claimed is:

1.   A vehicle diagnostic system comprising:

      a diagnostic instrument having an external data port; and

      a wireless adapter coupled to the external data port and configured to send vehicle

            diagnostic information wirelessly to a computing device.

2.   The system of claim 1, wherein the wireless adapter communicates with the

computing device by selectively using one of at least two data communications protocols.

3.   The system of claim 1, wherein the wireless adapter is further configured to

receive a control command from the computing device.

4.   The system of claim 1, wherein the diagnostic instrument is further configured to

generate a plurality of wireless data streams, the plurality of wireless data streams

including vehicle diagnostic information.

5.   The system of claim 1, wherein the wireless adapter is further configured to

receive a time base synchronization command from the computing device.

6.   A method for wireless communication of vehicle diagnostic information using a

diagnostic instrument including a wireless adapter, the method comprising steps of:

      assembling a series of control commands;

      sending, by a computing device, a first of the series of control commands to the

            wireless adapter; and

      receiving, from the wireless adapter, an acknowledgement of the first control

            command.

7.   The method of claim 6, further comprising:

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2   sending, by the computing device, a second of the series of control commands

3   responsive to the receiving step.

1 8.   The method of claim 6, further comprising:

2   receiving, by a plurality of computing devices, the vehicle diagnostic information

3   sent by the wireless adapter.

1 9.   The method of claim 8, wherein the receiving step further comprises:

2   listening for the vehicle diagnostic information before sending, to the diagnostic

3   instrument, a request command for the vehicle diagnostic information.

1 10.   The method of claim 8, further comprising:

2   relaying, by the diagnostic instrument, data from one of the plurality of computing

3   devices to another of the plurality of computing devices.

1 11.   The method of claim 6, further comprising:

2   displaying a warning on a display screen of the computing device before sending

3   a control command to the diagnostic instrument.

1 12.   The method of claim 6, further comprising:

2   sending vehicle diagnostic instrument status information the computing device.

1 13.   The method of claim 12, further comprising:

2   displaying a warning on a display screen responsive to the status information.

1 14.   A method for wireless communication of vehicle diagnostic information, the

2 method comprising steps of:

3   generating, by at least one vehicle diagnostic instrument, a plurality of wireless

4   data streams, the plurality of wireless data streams including vehicle

5   diagnostic information; and

6   receiving, by at least one computing device, the plurality of wireless data streams.

1   15.   The method of claim 14, further comprising:

2   placing the at least one computing device in a master mode; and

3   sending a command to the at least one vehicle diagnostic instrument responsive to

4   the placing step.

1   16.   The method of claim 14, further comprising:

2   parsing, by the at least one computing device, the plurality of wireless data

3   streams to produce a data segment; and

4   assigning an identifier to the data segment.

1   17.   A vehicle diagnostic instrument comprising:

2   a connection network configured to provide a communications path;

3   a data acquisition unit coupled to the connection network and configured to

4   receive diagnostic information;

5   a processor coupled to the connection network and configured to process the

6   diagnostic information;

7   a communications interface coupled to the connection network, the

8   communications interface having an external data port; and

9   a wireless adapter coupled to the external data port and configured to send the

10   diagnostic information wirelessly to a computing device.

1   18.   The diagnostic instrument of claim 17, wherein the wireless adapter

2   communicates with the computing device by selectively using one of at least two data

3   communications protocols.

1   19.   The diagnostic instrument of claim 17, wherein the communications interface

2   provides a bidirectional serial protocol for the external data port and interfaces the

3   bidirectional serial protocol to the connection network.

1   20.   The diagnostic instrument of claim 17, wherein the wireless adapter is further

2   configured to receive a control command from the computing device and to send the

3   control command to the processor.

1   21.   The diagnostic instrument of claim 20, wherein the processor is further configured

2   to enable data capture by the data acquisition unit responsive to a start control command.

1   22.   The diagnostic instrument of claim 20, wherein the processor is further configured

2   to disable data capture by the data acquisition unit responsive to a stop control command.

1   23.   The diagnostic instrument of claim 20, wherein the control command

2   synchronizes the time base of the computing device and the vehicle diagnostic

3   instrument.

1   24.   An apparatus for operating a plurality of diagnostic instruments, the apparatus

2   comprising:

3   a user interface module configured to enable a user to select at least one of the

4   plurality of diagnostic instruments;

5   an instrument interface module configured to send a control command to the

6   selected diagnostic instrument; and

7   an instrument status module configured to monitor status information from the

8   selected diagnostic instrument.

1   25.   The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising:

2   a data analysis module configured to assign an identifier to diagnostic information

3   received from the selected diagnostic instrument.

1 26.   A user interface for a computing device to control a plurality of diagnostic

2 instruments, the user interface comprising:

3   an instrument selection element configured to list available ones of the plurality of

4   diagnostic instruments; and

5   an active selection element corresponding to the instrument selection element and

6   configured to select for use, by the computing device, the data from the

7   corresponding diagnostic instrument.

1 27.   The user interface of claim 26, further comprising:

2   a broadcast mode selection element corresponding to the instrument selection

3   element and configured to invoke broadcast mode on the corresponding

4   diagnostic instrument.

1 28.   The user interface of claim 26, further comprising:

2   a master mode selection element corresponding to the instrument selection

3   element and configured to invoke master mode on the corresponding

4   diagnostic instrument.